

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO USIA WASHDC
SECSTATE WASHDC 9687
USNATO BRUSSELS 4788
USMISSION US BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON
CONCSOUTH NAPLES
AMEMBASSY ROME
CTF SIX ZERO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
CONFAIRMED NAPLES
USS INDEPENDENCE

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 04221

USIAC

REF: BRUSSELS 3609

SUBJECT: BELGIAN NATO YOUTH TOUR

1.INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: USIS BRUSSELS JOINED WITH USIS/
USNATO IN SPONSORING TOUR FOR YOUNG POLITICAL AND UNIVERSITY
LEADERS APRIL 15-23 WITH STOPS AT BRUSSELS,NAPLES,USS
INDEPENDENCE,AND BERLIN.BRIEFINGS INCLUDED NATO,CENTRAL AND
SOUTHERN MILITARY AND POLITICAL SITUATION,AND POLITICAL MILITARY-
ECONOMIC SITUATION OF BERLIN.TOUR GROUP INCLUDED TEN PARTICIPANTS
REPRESENTING FLEMISH AND FRANCOPHONE POLITICAL YOUTH
ORGANIZATIONS AND UNIVERSITIES,ESCORTED BY USIS BRUSSELS ACAO
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AND EMBASSY BRUSSELS POLITICAL OFFICER.TOUR WAS HIGHLY
SUCCESSFUL AND ACCOMPLISHED POST GOAL OF BETTER ACQUAINTING
KEY BELGIAN YOUTH LEADERS WITH STRENGTH OF ATLANTIC ALLIANCE
AND WITH REALITIES OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS.END SUMMARY.

2.THEME WHICH EMERGED CLEARLY IN BRIEFINGS BY REPRESENTATIVES
OF USNATO AND NATO INTERNATIONAL STAFF WAS THAT ALLIANCE IS

HEALTHY AND,SINCE THE ARAB-ISRAELI WAR OF 1973,HAS HAD MUCH GREATER SUCCESS AT MUTUAL CONSULTATION AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AMONG MEMBER COUNTRIES.PARTICIPANTS SUBSEQUENTLY JUDGED BRIEFINGS TO BE VERY INFORMATIVE,PROVIDING USEFUL OVERVIEW FOR REST OF TRIP.

3.AT NAPLES,AF SOUTH CHIEF OF STAFF LED DISCUSSION WHICH PROVIDED POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC OVERVIEW OF SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE AND REVIEWED DEVELOPMENTS WHICH HAVE SERVED TO STRENGTHEN NATO SOUTHERN FLANK.ALTHOUGH SOMEWHAT SKEPTICAL OF THESIS THAT LONG-TERM ADVANTAGES INCLUDED TIME WORKING AGAINST SOVIET IDEOLOGY AND THAT LACK OF FREEDOM IN WARSAW PACT ULTIMATELY REDOUNDING TO WESTERN BENEFIT,BELGIANS WERE REASSURED BY SOUTHERN COMMAND'S STRENGTH AND TACTICAL CAPABILITIES,PLEASE TO SEE IMPORTANT ROLE PLAYED BY EUROPEANS IN NATO,AND IMPRESSED BY QUALITY OF BRIEFINGS.

4.VISIT TO USSS INDEPENDENCE DURING 36 HOUR EXERCISE PROVIDED FIRST-HAND LOOK AT DEFENSE OPERATIONS.BRIEFINGS EMPHASIZED HISTORICAL/MILITARY CONTEXTS,BUT CONSTANT INTERACTION AMONG VISITING BELGIAN GROUP,CREW,AND OFFICERS PERMITTED ENORMOUS FLOW OF INFORMATION ON SHIP FUNCTIONS AND HUMAN BEHAVIOR. PARTICIPANTS FOUND THIS VISIT HIGH POINT OF TOUR,IMPRESSED NOT ONLY BY WARM WELCOME AND BY EFFICIENCY OF SHIP UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES,BUT BY DEDICATION OF SHIP'S PERSONNEL.ONE PARTICIPANT,WHO PREVIOUSLY BELIEVED IN INEVITABLE WESTERN DECLINE, SAID, " OUR PAPERS WRITE OFTEN THAT NATO IS WEAKER THAN THE RUSSIANS BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF DETERMINATION OF OUR ARMIES.. I DO KNOW THAT THE NAVY HAS GOOD OFFICERS AND I HAVE MORE UNCLASSIFIED

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CONFIDENCE IN THE CHANCES OF THE WEST."

5.WEST BERLIN BRIEFINGS BY DCM AND REPRESENTATIVES OF US MISSION FEATURED POST-WAR HISTORY OF CITY AND REVIEW OF PRESENT SITUATION.BRIEFERS WERE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FOR WEST BERLIN AND NOTED THAT CITY CONTINUES TO BE SHOWCASE OF WESTERN DEMOCRACY AND BELLWETHER IN EAST-WEST RELATIONS.PROGRAM ALSO INCLUDED LUNCHEON-DISCUSSION WITH MEMBERS OF GERMAN PRESS CORPS AND BELGIAN CONSUL-GENERAL.SUBSEQUENT TRIP TO WALL PROVIDED TRANGIBLE REINFORCEMENT OF BRIEFINGS'S POINT THAT WALL KEEPS EAST GERMANS IN RATHER THAN PROVIDING DEFENSE AGAINST "IMPERIALIST"WEST. FOLLOWING DAY INCLUDED COMMERCIAL TOUR OF EAST BERLIN AND EXCELLENT BRIEFINGS ON EAST GERMANY BY REPRESENTATIVES OF EMBASSY BERLIN.GROUP FOUND BERLIN BRIEFINGS INTELLECTUALLY MOST STIMULATING AND APPRECIATED FRANKNESS AND " REALISM " OF US OFFICIALS IN ANSWERING ALL QUESTIONS.

6.EVALUATION: THIS WAS FIRST TIME WE HAD SENT A GROUP OF

YOUNG BELGIAN POLITICAL LEADERS ON SUCH A TOUR.RESULT WAS
SUCCESS.GROUP WAS KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
POSED INTELLIGENT QUESTIONS,AND TOOK NOTES AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY.
INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS OF DAY'S EVENT INEVITABLY TOOK PLACE
EVEN AFTER SESSIONS WITH BRIEFERS WERE OVER.ALL PARTICIPANTS
AGREED THAT TRIP WAS ILLUMINATINGTHEY NOW SEE ALLIANCE AS
HEALTHIER THAN THEY HAD THOUGHT AND ITS FORCES MORE PREPARED
AND EFFICIENT.THEY HAVE BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS
AND REALIZE NATO AND US WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY VITAL
ROLE IN DEFENSE OF WEST.THEY HAVE PROMISED TO REPORT FULLY
TO THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIPS OF GROUPS THEY REPRESENT.

7. USIS BRUSSELS IS DEPLY INDEBTED TO THOSE AT NATO,AFSOUTH,
SIXTH FLEET,US MISSION BERLIN AND EMBASSY BERLIJ WHO HELPED
MAKE TRIP A SUCCESS.

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